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Northern Region News

A Newsletter for Employees and Retirees

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May 1995

Chasing Avalanches

Gallatin NF's Avalanche Center

by Karl Birkeland,
Avalanche Specialist,
Gallatin NF, Bozeman, Montana

Recreational use of the backcountry continues to skyrocket in the National Forests of the Northern Region. The Gallatin NF has an estimated 75,000 annual snowmobiler user days each year in the West Yellowstone area and another 38,000 user days in the Cooke City area. With increasing backcountry use around the country has come an increase in avalanche accidents. Last year, there were 13 fatalities. Six of those fatalities were Montana snowmobilers. More than ever, winter recreationists going into the backcountry need to be educated and need current information about avalanche conditions.

The trend of increasing backcountry use on the Gallatin NF was evident in the late 1980s and was reflected in rises in the numbers of avalanche fatalities and near-misses. It was apparent that improved avalanche information and education was needed for those visiting in the backcountry. The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center was established in Bozeman, MT, 1990-1991, to address these needs.

Currently the center is staffed by two employees: Karl Birkeland and Ron Johnson and is supervised by Kimberly Schlenker, recreation/wilderness staff assistant. Karl and Ron have been involved with avalanches for many years. Both are former ski patrolers with extensive avalanche-control experience, and both have Master's degrees related to snow and avalanches.

The purpose of the avalanche center is: (1) to provide avalanche advisories to backcountry users, and (2) to provide avalanche education to the general public. Avalanche advisories, which give current avalanche conditions and expected mountain weather, are issued six days a week. When snow conditions are particularly dangerous, avalanche warnings are issued and distributed to media sources throughout southwestern Montana. Snowpack information is collected from Bridger Bowl and Big Sky winter recreation areas, backcountry observers, Soil Conservation Service snow measurements at remote sites, and the field observations of the avalanche center staff. Ron and Karl each spend three or more days a week digging snow pits and analyzing snow and avalanche conditions.

Current weather information is collected by computers every morning from remote weather stations, satellite photographs and weather maps. This information is utilized in formulating current, detailed mountain weather forecasts. Advisories, based on the mountain weather forecasts and snowpack information are available to the public via telephone hotlines in Bozeman, Cooke City, and West Yellowstone. Use of the Bozeman hotline has grown by more than 30% every year since 1990. This year, more than 7,400 calls were received on the information hotlines. The advisory is also sent via FAX to local businesses that post the information. Last year, more than 3,000 copies of advisories were FAXed from the center.

The center conducts a variety of avalanche classes and seminars. These classes range from one-hour awareness talks to multi-day seminars, including field sessions. Groups requesting classes from the avalanche center range from elementary school children to search and rescue groups, snowmobile

guides, and university students. The teaching expertise of the center staff is recognized nationally. Last year, center instructors taught a total of 26 classes, involving approximately 1,100 people.

Volunteers are essential to the day-to-day operations. They regularly accompany Karl and Ron into the field. Backcountry observers periodically provide vital snowpack information. Other volunteers run the Friends of the Avalanche Center, an independent, non-profit group that was organized to raise funds and provide support and assistance. Community members of the Friends group recently purchased a computer for the avalanche center.



Karl Birkeland, (r.) discusses avalanche conditions with a group of Minnesota snowmobilers on Lionhead Mountain near West Yellowstone.
Photo by Ron Johnson

Establishment of the Gallatin NF avalanche center was a unique and proactive approach to the growing problem of avalanches. The increasing number of calls coming to the center hotlines illustrates the need for and usefulness of the information. Requests for courses and seminars continue to stretch the center's capabilities. Perhaps the best measure of the success of the center program is the broad-based community support, the number of working partnerships, the public's use of the services and the large number of volunteers helping with the operation.

Missoula Technology & Development Center

Evaluating Global Positioning System Aircraft Navigation in Complex Terrain

by Harold Thistle, project leader,
Forest Pest Management,
Missoula Technology & Development
Center

The Missoula Technology & Development Center (MTDC) recently tested differential global positioning systems (DGPS) for aircraft guidance and position recording on the Ninemile RD, Lolo NF.

The tests were sponsored by Forest Pest Management/WO. Harold Thistle was project leader, aided by Tony Jasumback and Bill Kilroy. This new technology promises aircraft positioning and guidance with an absolute accuracy of 2 to 5 meters.

A test course was surveyed on the Ninemile Ranger RD with the help of Don Patterson of the R-1 engineering staff. The course consisted of a line surveyed within a two-centimeter accuracy and three "blocks" which each tested features of Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) system navigation.

There was substantial interest in these tests. More than 75 people participated as observers and in other parts of the technical program, designed to familiarize people with this type of equipment.

Three countries (U.S., Canada and New Zealand) sent personnel to the MTDC test program. Along with the foreign visitors, a number of Federal and State agencies, and private firms sent observers. Their participation facilitated interaction and exchange of ideas among industry, State departments and Federal agencies.

Two companies (AgNav, Swanton VT and

SatLoc, Casa Grande AZ) agreed to participate in the MTDC testing on the Ninemile RD. Demonstrators paid their own expenses and demonstrated their respective systems. This reflected their strong commitment to developing navigation systems appropriate to USDA Forest Service applications.

The test course was designed to demonstrate the limits of these systems from an engineering standpoint. This engineering testing was a success. Unfortunately, weather conditions at the time of the demonstrations were marginal during both test days. As a result, all system capabilities could not be examined and evaluated. The test results are still preliminary. A full, detailed report is being prepared.

Initial indications are that it will be worthwhile to do some independent ground proofing, if these systems are to be the sole source of positional information on projects.

The informative week was of great ben-

efit to all participants interested in utilizing DGPS for aircraft guidance systems in forest pest management work.

Logistical support was provided by Dave Rising, Mike Huey and others at the MTDC fabrication shop. Missoula Aerial Fire Depot assisted with aviation aspects and the MTDC photographic shop and the Ninemile RD were essential to the success of the testing-demonstration program. Jack Barry, WO Forest Pest Management, was the driving force and provided essential leadership in planning and organizing this international evaluation and testing.

Differential Global Positioning System navigation is the wave of the future, particularly in National Forest Systems programs where highly accurate flying is essential. Mountain flying presents challenges to these systems not encountered in the flatlands.



Above: Testing differential global positioning systems for aircraft guidance systems at the Ninemile RD landing strip.
Below: Command trailer and observers at the Ninemile RD landing Strip.
Photos by MTDC.



North Dakota to Plant 100 Million Trees by 2000

by Glenn A. Roloff,
Cooperative Forest Management Specialist,
RO Forest and Rangeland Management Staff



WILDLIFE LANDOWNER AWARDS FOR TREE PLANTING EFFORTS were presented by Lt. Governor Rosemarie Myrdal (third from left) and North Dakota State University President Jim Ozburn (third from right) to Bruce and Holly Gaugler (left) and Ralph and Alice Gaugler (right) of Bismarck, N.D.

North Dakota's Centennial Trees Program began as the focus for celebrating their 1989 state centennial. This ambitious, all-encompassing Centennial Trees Program includes a goal of planting 100 million trees in rural areas and communities by the year 2000.

The tree-planting goal was selected as the No. 1 North Dakota Centennial project because all people can become involved in the program, it can encompass the entire State, and because of the long-lasting nature of growing trees for future generations. Consequently, the Centennial Commission—established in 1987 to oversee and coordinate statewide centennial activities—identified tree planting as the top priority. Although the Centennial Trees Program officially began in 1989, several Centennial tree planting projects were initiated and accomplished as early as 1987. To meet the 100-million-trees goal, planting had to be increase three-fold annually from the 1987 planting level.

The North Dakota legislature has taken the following actions:

1987 established the Centennial Commission to conduct and coordinate events for celebrating the state centennial; 1989 established the Centennial Trees Program, which included a trust fund and a voluntary state income tax checkoff for contributing funds for tree planting activities; 1990 phased out the Centennial Commission, replacing it with an interim trees commission; 1991 established the Centennial Trees Commission, chaired by the Lt. Governor; 1995 in this current biennial session, North Dakota is evaluating the program and considering changing the Commission to a private, non-profit foundation.

Through a high-profile, ambitious information & education promotional program, the Commission has encouraged individuals, organizations, government agencies at all levels, and schools to become involved in the tree planting program. For their exemplary efforts, the Commission received the prestigious National Arbor Day Foundation Project Award for its vision, leadership and outstanding efforts to plant 100 million trees by the year 2000.

Prior to this program, North Dakota led the nation, by a sizeable margin, in conservation tree plantings for field and farmstead windbreaks. A significant number of North Dakota's larger communities have professional foresters administering extensive community forestry programs.

Since the beginning of the Centennial Trees Program, annual tree planting accomplishments have risen to over 6 million trees, doubling the annual planting rate prior to 1987. From 1987 through 1993, nearly 29 million trees have been planted.

State Forester Larry Kotchman and his North Dakota Forest Service staff are playing a major role in promoting the program, and providing technical and cost/share assistance and grants for tree planting/ maintenance to communities and rural landowners.

The North Dakota Forest Service's tree nursery at Towner provides nearly all of the conifer seedlings planted on rural lands. The nursery produced 1.3 million tree seedlings last year.

The USDA Forest Service's Northern Region, through the Forest and Rangeland Management Staff (formerly Timber, Cooperative Forestry & Pest Management), pro-

vides technical and financial assistance to the State Forester through a variety of State & Private Forestry programs, including Forest Stewardship; Stewardship Incentive (cost/share program with rural landowners); Tree Improvement & Nurseries; and the Urban and Community Forestry Program.

The Denbigh Experimental Forest (under the administration of the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Experiment Station) is about 15 miles from North Dakota's Towner Tree Nursery. Denbigh Forest provides a high percentage of the conifer seeds used at the Towner Nursery.

Success of the North Dakota Centennial Tree Planting Program has been confirmed by recognition from many quarters. Each fall North Dakota State University hosts the Centennial Trees bowl football game in Fargo. At halftime ceremonies, the Centennial Tree Commission recognizes individuals and organizations for their outstanding efforts. As the Bison fans leave the stadium, conifer seedlings are distributed, with planting & care instructions from Towner Nursery.

The State Forester addresses a large Arbor Day audience (1st Friday in May) and reports on the tree planting totals for the previous year and the cumulative total since the start of the Centennial Trees Program.

Each spring North Dakota's Lt. Governor presents the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA awards to communities. In 1994, 48 North Dakota communities qualified for awards for outstanding tree planting efforts. Twelve of these communities also qualified for the Tree City USA Growth Award.



Packing in Wilderness is a "Dream Come True"

by Menn Pollworth
Information Assistant,
Nez Perce National Forest



Doug Hunt and his pack string.

The quiet scenes along the dusty trail that follows the wild and scenic Selway River are familiar to packer Douglas "Doug" Hunt and his pack string.

Doug, a Forest Service animal packer, freights supplies by mule string on a 27-mile trek four times a month from Selway Falls to Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. "I make the round trip once a week and also pack to other destinations," Doug explains. "I really enjoy working with mules."

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Doug moved to Elgin, Oregon, after high school. It was at Elgin that Hunt learned packing and started working as a packer. Doug's hero, a retired Forest Service packer, helped him. "Fred Talbott took the time to teach me a lot of skills, when I first started," Hunt recalls.

Doug worked for an outfitter and guide before getting a Forest Service job in 1989 as a packer on the Red River District, Elk City, Idaho. In 1990, he moved to another animal packer job on the Moose Creek District, Nez Perce NF. At Moose Creek, primitive ways of doing things is a way of life. Doug has learned to cut grass with a team of mules and a mower. According to Doug, his "golden rule" packing with animals is as simple as treating the stock fairly for them to work well with him.

True to the heart of an animal packer, Doug's favorite places in the world are the mountains and high country. "There are a lot of mountains I've never been to — mountains that I would like to take pack trips into," he says.



Hunt mowing grass with a team of mules at the Moose Creek landing strip.

"I had the funniest thing happened to me at work once," Doug chuckles. "A bear cub came tumbling down the hillside and landed right smack in the middle of the pack string," he recalls. "Two mules ran back while the other two came to me in the front." What amazed Doug is how he, his horse, and a mule on each side, managed to stay on an 18-inch-wide trail. "I don't know how we did it. It was a rodeo for a bit, until I got everything under control," he says.

Doug enjoys fly fishing, next to packing and working with mules. He also loves to travel. In 1994, Doug spent the whole month of February snorkeling in the Great Barrier Reef, horseback riding in the Snowy Mountains of Australia, and fly fishing in New Zealand.

"I'm doing it," Doug responds in referring to animal packing as his dream job. "I was in the sixth grade when I saw a documentary on the Forest Service. They showed a ranger station that you had to pack into. From then on, that was it for me," he claims. Having his dream of becoming a Forest Service packer come true is the accomplishment Doug Hunt is most proud of.

5th Anniversary

Hispanic Employee Association Meets May 24, RO East Conference Room

by Tim Hancock,
Gallatin NF,
Bozeman, Montana

In July of 1990, a group of Hispanic employees met in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to seek ways to assist the Chief's efforts in moving toward a multicultural organization. Two months later, the Chief, Regional Foresters and Station and Area Directors established and chartered the USDA Forest Service Hispanic Employee Association (FSHEA).

Acting Regional Forester John Hughes says "I look forward to working with FSHEA in the Northern Region, where we value our diverse workforce and encourage all opinions and views."

Hughes has approved a request for a one-day FSHEA meeting, Wednesday, May 24, in the East Conference Room, RO, 9:00 to 3:00.

The primary objective of the FSHEA meeting is information sharing, discussion of a Regional Action Plan, Hispanic issues and other workforce and work life issues. It will be an opportunity for Hispanic employees to meet each other and develop a networking system.

This meeting is open to all Forest Service employees. You do not have to be Hispanic or belong to FSHEA to attend. Hughes said that the information developed at the meeting will be helpful in the developing a strong and effective workforce.

FSHEA officers and planning committee members are Tomasa (Tommi) Burton, chair, Missoula RD, Lolo NF; Tim Hancock, co-chair, Gallatin NF; Val Valenzuela, secretary, Kootenai NF; Susan Valenzuela, treasurer, Kootenai NF; Steve Ortega, Nez Perce NF; Joe Encinas, Idaho Panhandle NFs; and Guadalupe Renteria, Idaho Panhandle NFs.

Evaluating Permits

Environmental Analyses Required for Renewing R-1 Grazing Permits

by Bruce Fox,
RO Range Administration

Ranchers and farmers holding grazing permits on National Grasslands and National Forests in the Northern Region have been notified that formal environmental analyses must be conducted before permits are renewed.

Approximately 500 R-1 grazing permits expire on December 31, 1995. A need exists to develop adequate National Environmental Policy Act documentation on which we can base decisions for reissuing permits.

The regional strategy for evaluating these permits was outlined at a Regional workshop in February. A Regional Interdisciplinary Team is coordinating the evaluation of the R-1 grazing permits.

Under the new Forest Service policy, before deciding to issue standard 10-year grazing permits, the environmental effects of grazing must be analyzed and documented. All R-1 grazing permits will be subject to the assessment as they come up for renewal, if they had not received previous analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act. Included in the analysis will be ample opportunity for public comment on any proposal to reissue a permit.

New grazing fees announced in March, established under the 1978 Public Rangeland Improvement Act, take into account such factors as wholesale meat prices, production costs and the price of grazing animals on private lands. The 1995 grazing fee is down 19%, from \$1.98 an "animal unit month" to \$1.68.

An "animal unit month" is the amount of forage needed to sustain a cow and her calf or five sheep for one month.

There were 1,267 grazing permittees in R-1 in 1994. These permits provided for 203,175 animals grazing 1,121,069 animal unit months.

For added details about the R-1 Grazing Term Permit Renewal, contact Fox by phone (406) 329-3564 or via DG, B.Fox:R01A.

Rocky Mountain Front

Lewis & Clark NF Reassessing Oil and Gas Leasing Policies

In April the Lewis & Clark NF mailed more than 400 copies of a newsletter that outlines the six alternatives being considered in developing an oil and gas environmental impact statement (EIS) on oil and gas leasing policies.

The final decision will be used to manage oil and gas development on the 1.8-million-acre National Forest until 2013, explained Robin Strathy, geologist on the Forest Plan Implementation staff and interdisciplinary team leader.

The six alternatives range widely, from not issuing any new oil and gas leases to leasing of all areas deemed available for oil and gas leasing. Projections of possible oil and gas activity should leases be issued include up to 24 wells. Currently there are 67 oil and gas leases on 153,182 acres. Leasing is now concentrated on the Rocky Mountain Front.

Strathy says that, at the earliest, a draft decision will be issued in about six months. She says that following the completion of the draft decision, the public will have a 45-day comment period. A final decision and the final EIS will be issued after comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are evaluated and any necessary changes are made to the document.

Acting Lewis & Clark National Forest Supervisor John Greer says the oil-gas drilling policy decision is going to be controversial because of the "values the public has placed on the Rocky Mountain Front."

"Many groups and individuals who are concerned about the environment don't want to see the front developed. I think that will be the focal point of the controversy."

To secure copies of the alternatives to be evaluated for oil and gas leasing, telephone (406) 791-7700, the Lewis & Clark NF headquarters, Box 869, Great Falls, MT. 59403.

"Building Memories"

From Work Experiences

by George Regas,
Supervisor Forester,
Elk City Ranger District,
Nez Perce NF

Throughout our careers, we often have opportunities to meet people who have had very positive experiences with the Forest Service in their teens. These experiences leave memorable imprints that these people often share through the years with relatives, friends and fellow workers.

This sharing of positive, memorable and meaningful experiences of their youth can be one of the effective image-builders for a business or an organization—particularly the Forest Service.

Focusing on this principle, we on the Elk City Ranger District, Elk City, Idaho, Nez Perce NF, seek out and pursue opportunities to build positive experiences for participants in our youth programs. Often these programs provide first time work experience for many youths. They provide opportunities for these young people to gain important work experiences that will be of benefit for future job applications and sow a seed of interest for possible future employment with the Forest Service.

One of the "memory building" experi-

ences this year on our district involved Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) students building and installing Oropendix Auto Tour signs. These tour signs will now serve as ready landmarks for local young people in identifying with their Forest Service work experience. Incidentally, one of the crew leaders for this project is a local person who was involved in a similar project as a YCC person about 10 years ago.

Another "memory building" experience was with the Student Conservation Association high school program. These students are recruited all across the nation. Most of them come from metropolitan population centers. For many of these young people, the Student Conservation Association work is a first time experience in the rural, backwoods and wilderness environments. They will take home a "picture" of a wilderness solitude experience and a conservation ethic that will become a part of their memory bank as a very special summer with the Forest Service.

Over the years, we in the Forest Service have employed this network of ambassadors who contribute significantly to this nation's perception of the Forest Service as a resource management and conservation organization.

As with many things in life, it works both ways. Personal rewards from interacting and working with these young people leave us with pleasant thoughts and reflections on our small contributions in the maturing and character building of these young people.

These youth programs are worthwhile investments that provide opportunities — like classroom teachers have — that permit us to be a small part of the future while accomplishing needed, on-the-ground work.



Above: Youth Conservation Corps youths installing an auto tour sign on Red River RD.

Below: Student Conservation Association high school students and YCC youths restoring a trail on a Red River RD watershed rehabilitation project.

Photos by Ron Ponozzo and Deb Taylor



Storm King 14 Memorial Statue

Joyce Killebrew, Sedona, Arizona, the artist who designed the statue commemorating the Storm King 14, reports the Glenwood Springs Memorial Committee is still accepting donations for the memorial ceremony planned this summer. White River National Forest Supervisor Sonny LaSalle, Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81602 is chairman of the Memorial Committee. Without more donations, the Memorial Committee will not be able to provide

each family a small, 18-inch replica of the memorial statue. Those interested in making contributions for the memorial should make checks payable to:

Storm King 14 Memorial. Mail to:
Glenwood Springs Memorial Committee
c/o City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
806 Cooper Ave.
Glenwood Springs, CO
81601-3495

For additional information, telephone
(303) 945-2575.

Chief Presents Award

Bitterroot National Forest Receives Stewardship Award

by Cass Cairns,
Information Assistant,
Bitterroot National Forest

Bitterroot NF Supervisor Steve Kelly, at a special leadership conference in Washington, D.C. in January, accepted the Chief's 1994 Forest Service Stewardship Award for the Bitterroot NF.

In presenting the award, Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas said that "During the past five years, employees of the Bitterroot National Forest have engineered a new approach to stewardship of the Forest's natural resources...strengthening the Forest's credibility among its internal peers, professional associates, community leaders, interest groups and the research community.

"Forest (Bitterroot NF) employees and partners have invested a great deal of time and personal energy to improve stewardship of the Bitterroot's resources." Thomas also cited the Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project, a five-year project on the north Bitterroot mountain range as another example of the "tangible results of Forest employees and partners efforts in the field".

The Stewardship Award includes a \$50,000 grant to the Bitterroot NF which the

Forest will disperse equally among the four Ranger Districts for use on soil, water and air related projects.

The Bitterroot NF was one of ten nominees submitted from eight Regional offices and two Research Stations throughout the nation.

The Chief's Stewardship Award was initiated in 1987 to honor outstanding stewardship accomplishments leading to the conservation of the soil, water and air resources of the National Forests and Grasslands.

FOREST SERVICE CHIEF Jack Ward Thomas (left) presents the 1994 Chief's Forest Service Stewardship Award to Supervisor Steve Kelly for the Bitterroot NF.



Honor Award

"TEAM USDA"

Receives Regional Forester's Equal Opportunity Award

by Sunny Hemphill,
RO Personnel Management

The Regional Forester's Equal Opportunity Award for fiscal year 1994 has been presented to Team USDA for their work in developing and presenting a multicultural festival of cultural sharing last May.

Team USDA, a group of combined U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, produced a combined ethnic observance program that featured a full agenda of wheel chair basketball, films, music, dancing, ethnic food, panel discussions and a variety of keynote speakers.

A winning factor was the partnership feature that included the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, University of Montana and the Forest Service. Supported financially by every Forest Service shop in the regional headquarters and Missoula-area USDA agencies, the program exemplified teamwork at its best. The partnership demonstrated support for workforce diversity goals by every staff unit as well as the quality of the Regional

Cultural Awareness Programs.

This pioneering effort combined cultural celebrations/observances with USDA workforce diversity goals. Co-chairpersons Elaine Poser, RO Wildlife & Fisheries, and Jolyn Wiggins, Intermountain Research Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory, Missoula, coordinated the activities of the group, made assignments, and verified readiness. Each volunteer member of the group contributed to the general planning and implementation — in addition to their routine, regular job work.

Once the initial theme and format were determined, each member of the group served on at least one sub-team, taking full responsibility for arrangements that included facilities, participants, publicity, food, decorations, budgeting, moderators and managerial support. From January to May, the volunteers contributed time and talents to planning and preparations. Team USDA members utilized an electronic mailing list to



PRESENTATION OF HONOR AWARDS TO MEMBERS OF TEAM USDA: (left top to bottom right) Sunny Hemphill, Ira Jones, Steve Morton, Brian Vachowski, Kathy Daugherty, Betty Blocker, Ellen Anderson, Pat Antonich, Sandi English. OTHER MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Elaine Poser, Jolyn Wiggins, Bobbi Broderick, Jacalyn Strain, Yolanda Harris, Oswaldo Mino, Beverly Staber, Dani Hegwood, Josiah Kim, Judy Schluter, and Mike Turley.

keep each other informed as to needs and progress on the project.

The project was a graphic demonstration of cooperation and respect for the contributions of other members of the working group. It was apparent each member was valued for their contributions. All of the members demonstrated initiative in contributing efforts that enhanced the production. Commitment and accountability were consistent from the start until the final curtain fell. It was a demonstration for workforce diversity in action.

Aerial Survey Findings

Insect & Disease Conditions in R-1

If the summer of 1993 was the summer of clouds and rain, then 1994 was the summer of fire and smoke. Both sets of environmental conditions proved to be challenges to Insect & Disease Management's forest health monitoring specialists in completing their R-1 annual aerial survey during the summers.

by Timothy J. McConnell,
Aerial Survey Program Manager,
Insect & Disease Management
Missoula Field Office

Each year approximately 370 hours are flown, from July 1 to September 15, to detect and monitor effects of insects and diseases on most forested lands in the Region. Daily flying time is from four to seven hours, depending on weather. Safety location check-ins are made at every 15 minutes to insure that Forest dispatchers know the location of the survey aircraft. In 1994, R-1 aerial survey costs exceeded \$62,000.

Below are some highlights of the 1994 aerial survey findings:

Diseases

NEEDLE CASE IN LODGEPOLE Over the past several years, there has been a virtual epidemic of lodgepole pine needle cast throughout the western half of the Northern Region. In the past three years, the disease has been especially severe along the Bitterroot Divide in northwestern Montana and northeastern Idaho. This fungus-caused disease causes a bright discoloration and death of one-year-old needles. The damage can be widespread and alarming in appearance in May and June. Although the visual symptoms of this disease can be dramatic, tree mortality is generally low.

ELYTRODERMA NEEDLE CAST Elytroderma needle cast of ponderosa pine is caused by a fungus. It kills one-year-old needles and causes brooming and deformation of twigs and branches. Infected needles

turn bright red in late spring and fade to brown by the end of the summer. The disease is common throughout western Montana's Bitterroot Valley. In 1994, an unusually severe outbreak occurred along the west side of Flathead Lake in northwestern Montana. The outbreak raised the concerns of many landowners in the area. Disease impacts are greatest on seedlings and saplings. Mature trees are rarely killed directly. Severe infection can reduce growth and may predispose trees to root disease or bark beetle attacks.

DIPLODIA BLIGHT Diplodia blight is a canker-causing fungus that kills new shoots on ponderosa pine trees. The disease is of localized importance throughout western Montana and northern Idaho. It is especially damaging in areas planted with off-site ponderosa pine stock. In 1994, it was notably severe near Kooskia, Grangeville and Orofino in Idaho and in the Bitterroot Valley and along the Clark Fork River corridor, between Dixon and Noxon, in western Montana.

Bark Beetle

WESTERN PINE BEETLE As in neighboring western Regions, there has been a dramatic increase in ponderosa pine mortality caused by this bark beetle. Found only west of the Continental Divide, this beetle normally kills overmature trees. In epidemic

conditions, the beetle attacks smaller trees weakened by drought, fire, overstocking or root disease.

PINE ENGRAVER (Ips) Because of 1994's warm, dry summer, pine engraver beetles may have had an extra generation. This extra generation, and the beetles attacking trees fading faster than normal, produced striking numbers of dead and dying pine along major river drainages in northern Idaho and western Montana. Since the trees faded in the fall, a special aerial survey was done on the lower Clark Fork River, from Nine Mile to Thompson Falls, MT, on November 22, 1994. There were approximately 4,800 new dead trees mapped on the November flight.

Defoliators

WESTERN SPRUCE BUDWORM Defoliation is at an all time low, lower than at any time since the first survey was conducted more than 40 years ago. Budworm defoliation is not expected to reappear until populations rebuild. History suggests that so long as susceptible hosts remain, budworm populations will rebound.

For more information about Forest Pest Management's R-1 1994 aerial survey; a copy of the 1994 Montana Conditions Report; and previous editions, contact: Tim McConnell, (406) 329-3136; P.O. Box 7669, Missoula MT 59807.



Working Together

Outfitter Recognized For Cooperative Help

by Menn Pollworth,
Information Assistant,
Nez Perce NF.

You can see a lightning storm building over the river breaks north of the Salmon River. Lightning strikes the ground. There's a puff of smoke. Then flames begin to billow. It's all quite natural, the event atop Elkhorn Mountain in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness of central Idaho.

Once there was a lookout structure on Elkhorn Mountain (7,907 feet). It was a perfect spot for a fire lookout.

In 1991, the Nez Perce NF assumed temporary administrative responsibility for removing the remains of the Elkhorn Mountain lookout structure. Eakin Ridge Outfitters, Inc., Salmon, Idaho, assisted the Red River RD in hauling out the lookout debris.

Wilderness Ranger Charlie Mabbott, Forest Service packer Harvey Baumgartner and

their mule pack strings had gone into the wilderness backcountry two weeks before the commercial outfitters-packers started freighting in hay, feed and supplies. Mabbott, Baumgartner and mules hauled sacks of the Elkhorn lookout debris to a stockpile at Swet cabin, several miles away. Elk Ridge packers loaded their pack strings at the Swet cabin stockpile. Each mule was loaded with two, 75-pound sacks for return trips out to the trailhead at Salmon base camp on Magruder road No. 468.

In this cooperative effort, Eakin Ridge Outfitters and the Forest Service have now freighted out by mules a total of 21,600 pounds (more than 10 tons) of cinder blocks and concrete out of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness since the summer of 1992.

Recently the Eakin Ridge Outfitters, Inc. was recognized for assisting in the cleanup of the debris. A Forest Service Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Eakin Ridge Outfitters manager Bud Leslie at his home in Salmon.

Effective planning and coordination of pack trips by Red River District employees and Eakin Ridge Outfitters reduced the impact on the trail system and other wilderness users. Cooperative utilization of Forest Service and Eakin Ridge pack strings reduced the total number of trips in and out of the wilderness. And the use of pack animals was minimized.

This cooperation, involving a commercial packer and the Forest Service, is a graphic example of the benefits that can be achieved in planning an efficient and effective operation toward a common goal.

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT Service Award was presented recently to Christine R. Everett, attorney, Office of the General Counsel, by Regional Forester David F. Jolly, in recognition of the substantial support, advice and counsel she provided to the Northern Region in the resolution of significant litigation and representation of Forest Service policy/strategy with the Department of Justice.



David Jolly (l) and
Christine R.
Everett.

Photo by Jud Moore

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service is a diverse organization committed to equal opportunity in employment and program delivery. USDA prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political affiliation and familial status. Persons believing they have been discriminated against should contact the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call 202-720-7327 (voice), or 202-720-1127 (TDD).

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Federal Employees Exempt From Old Fund Liability Tax

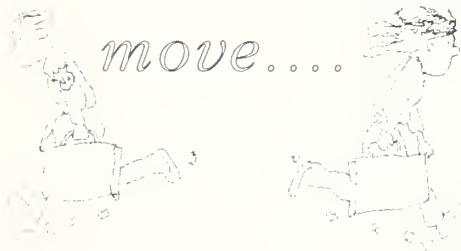
The National Finance Center (NFC) has advised the RO Personnel Management office that the State of Montana has enacted legislation to exempt wages paid to Federal employees from the Old Fund Liability Tax.

Beginning with Pay Period No. 6, NFC is no long withholding this Montana tax.

The Montana Dept. of Revenue has confirmed that Federal employees who have paid into the fund, since July of 1993, will be receiving a refund from the State of Montana. The Montana Dept. of Revenue has not yet established a process and time schedule for refunding the tax payments.

The department will advise RO Personnel Management when the refund procedure is finalized.

on the
move....



Charles C. (Chuck) Wildes

has been named supervisor of the Lolo NF. He reported to his new assignment in Missoula April 16. Wildes had been Supervisor of the Challis NF for the past four years. The last eight months, he served as supervisor of the combined Salmon and Challis NFs. Wildes is a graduate of the University of Montana School of Forestry (1969).



Charles C. Wildes

Van C. Elsbernd,

Supervisor of the Deerlodge NF since



Van C. Elsbernd

1989, has been assigned to Colorado to head up a new range-land management technical support group in Fort Collins. Elsbernd reported to his assignment in

Colorado May 1. Alan Christensen, program leader, Fish, Wildlife & Botany unit in the Northern Region headquarters, has been named acting supervisor for the Deerlodge NF.

Joe Wagenfehr Retires; 32 Years With Forest Service

Joe Wagenfehr, fire suppression operations officer for the Northern Region, retired in March after 32 years with the Forest Service.

A native of Phoenix, Arizona, Wagenfehr is a forestry graduate of Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.



Joe Wagenfehr

From 1960 to 1981, Wagenfehr worked in the Forest Service's Southwestern Region (Arizona/New Mexico): five summers in fire control; as a district forest ranger; National Forest Staff officer; and regional headquarters staff officer. He served on five Southwest Region National Forest and on the Aviation - Fire Management Staff in the regional headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He served as supervisor of the 2.1-million-acre Beaverhead NF, Dillon, Montana, from 1982 to 1985. For the past 10 years, Wagenfehr has been fire suppression operations officer for the Northern Region.

Joe and Claudia Wagenfehr will continue to make their home in Corvallis.

George Bain Named Philipsburg District Ranger

George Bain, 42, has been named District Ranger of the Deerlodge NF's Philipsburg RD. Bain succeeds Tom Heintz, who became the range and wildlife staff officer for the Deerlodge and Beaverhead NFs in December.

Bain will move to Philipsburg from Helena, where he works as the Forest Service's liaison officer at the Environmental Protection Agency. In that capacity, he reviews environmental analyses. He has held that post since 1992. From 1985 to 1992, Bain

Dan Svingen New Wildlife Biologist for Clearwater RD, Nez Perce NF

By Laura Smith,
Information Specialist,
Nez Perce NF, SO,
Grangeville, Idaho

Dan Svingen is the new wildlife biologist for the Clearwater RD, Nez Perce NF, Grangeville, Idaho. Previous to this assignment, Svingen was district wildlife biologist for the St. Maries (Idaho) RD, now called the St. Joe RD, Idaho Panhandle NFs.



Dan Svingen

A native of North Dakota, Svingen holds a master's degree in wildlife biology from the University of Wyoming (1991). Before joining the Forest Service in 1991, Svingen worked as a park ranger in North Dakota, collected biological information in reclaiming prairie at a lignite strip mine site in North Dakota and conducted research on river otters in Montana to evaluate their habitat use. While working for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in North Dakota, he administered funding and provided guidance to farmers and ranchers building stockponds and restoring wetlands.

His wife (Ila) is a fisheries biologist for the Forest Service in northeastern Oregon. They spend a portion of every other weekend driving to see each other.

Svingen enjoys birdwatching and lectures and writes on bird identification and distribution. Mr. & Mrs. Svingen have taken several birding vacations in Alaska, Texas, California, Oregon and Idaho.

was a forester on the Kootenai NF in western Montana. From 1979, when he began his Forest Service career, Bain worked as a forester in Idaho on both the Clearwater and Nez Perce NFs.

He earned a bachelor of science degree in forestry and wildlife in 1975 at Virginia Tech University. His family includes his wife, Carrie, an elementary school teacher, and their 2 1/2-year old daughter, Linnae.

Bain takes up his duties in Philipsburg May 14.

Personnel Update

BEAVERHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

AUSTIN, DEBORAH, district ranger, Mammoth Lakes RD, Inyo NF, promotion, forest supervisor, Beaverhead NF
 DUHAME, ROBERT, engineering equipment operator foreman, SO, spot award
 HOPPER, JOHN, engineering equipment operator, SO, spot award
 WILLIAMS, PATRICIA, co-op student trainee, forestry, R-2, promotion, Dillon RD

BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

GIBSON, NANCY, computer assistant, Stevensville RD, promotion, assistant dispatcher, SO
 JONES, LARRY, civil engineering technician, SO, belt buckle award
 OLSON, CHUCK, engineering equipment operator foreman, SO, belt buckle award
 PRICE, JEANNETTE, deputy center director, Trapper Creek JCC, promotion, center director

NEW EMPLOYEES

FITZPATRICK, EILEEN, clerk typist, SO

REASSIGNMENTS

STANFORD, SHIRLEY, support services specialist, Townsend RD, Helena NF, reassigned to Stevensville RD

CUSTER NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

MCCARTHY, CLINTON, wildlife biologist, SO, cash award
 WALSH, RUSSEL, surveying technician, East Zone Engineering, temporary promotion, civil engineering technician

NEW EMPLOYEES

DIXON-TAYLOR, ANNETTE, mail & file clerk, SO

FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

BURREN, BETH, forester, Hungry Horse RD, time-off award
 MENKENS, RANDY, forestry technician, Tally Lake RD, temporary promotion
 RICHARDSON, RODD, deputy forest supervisor, SO, temporary promotion, forest supervisor
 SUTTON, JODY, information assistant, SO, promotion, public affairs

REASSIGNMENTS

SCHMIDT, RODNEY, civil engineer technician, SO, reassignment, cartographic technician
 WINFIELD, JAY, rangeland management specialist, Spotted Bear RD, career-conditional appointment, Helena NF, rangeland management specialist

RESIGNATIONS

VIRDELL, PAM, business management assistant, Hungry Horse RD

GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

BURKENPAS, ANNA, personnel clerk, SO, cash award
 HANCOCK, PATT, personnel clerk, SO, cash award
 ROE, JOAN, personnel clerk, SO, cash award

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

KRATVILLE, SANDY, wildlife biologist, Livingston RD, LWOP/Peace Corps
 KRATVILLE, STEVE, resource assistant, Livingston RD, LWOP/Peace Corps
 PARAC, WADE, personnel management specialist, transfer, Coronado NF, personnel officer

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

DRINVILLE, MAUREEN, resource clerk, SO reinstatement
 GOLIE, JOYCE, office automation clerk, SO reinstatement
 TEEGARDEN, AMY, interpretive specialist, SO reassignment
 WINFIELD, JAY, rangeland management specialist, Helena RD, career-conditional appointment

IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS

REASSIGNMENT/TRANSFERS

CHRISMAN, ALLEN, supervisory forester, temporary appointment, to district ranger, Bonners Ferry RD

RESIGNATIONS

COLES, BARRY, supervisory forester, Priest Lake RD
 FISHER, JANET, support services supervisor, Priest Lake RD
 GEDEON, JEFFREY, lead civil engineering technician, Priest Lake RD
 MANTHIE, ELAINE, purchasing agent, St. Maries RD
 MOYLE, MARILYNN, forestry technician, Bonners Ferry RD
 PALMER SUSAN, voucher examiner, SO
 ROSS, TIMOTHY, civil engineering technician, Sandpoint RD

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

DESY, TOM, forester, Three Rivers RD, special act
 HACKE, MARGE, reality specialist, SO, performance award

HOLSTEIN, COLLIN, forestry technician, SO, promotion
 POTTER, PAT, resource assistant, promotion, supervisory resource specialist, SO
 SAUSER, JIM, forester, SO, performance award

NEW EMPLOYEES

KUNTZ, WADE, civilian pay clerk, career conditional, information receptionist, SO

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

CHUTE, TERRY, forestry technician, reassignment, NEPA forester, Rexford RD
 COHENOUR, SHARREN, resource clerk, reassignment, accounting technician, SO
 JOHNSON, CINDY, information receptionist, reassignment, resource clerk, SO
 NORBERG, NANCY, supervisory resource specialist, SO, promotion, timber accounting officer, R-4, RO

LEWIS & CLARK NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

COATS, ROBERT, forestry technician, Judith RD, spot award
 FEARS, DALE, budget and accounting analyst, SO spot award
 KNECHT, CARO, support services specialist, Judith RD, promotion
 WOLFE, MICHAEL, land surveyor, SO promotion

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

FINNEGAN, PAT, law enforcement officer, Rocky Mountain RD, career-conditional appointment
 PARKER, JEFFREY, civil engineering technician, San Jaun NF reassignment to SO
 SCHMIDT, GUY, civil engineer, SO reassignment

LOLO NATIONAL FOREST

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

BROWDER, DAVID, biological scientist, SO, spot award
 BROWN, KEVIN, forestry technician, SO, time off award
 CROSS, MARCIA, student trainee archeology, Bitterroot NF, service award
 NACHTIGAL, JOE, lead forestry technician, Ninemile RD, promotion, forestry technician, SO
 PHILIPS, JAN, civil engineering technician, East Zone Engineering, time off award
 VANDEWERKER, TED, budget & accounting analyst, SO, temporary promotion, budget & finance officer, Deerlodge NF
 ZIMMERMANN, ANNE, district ranger, Seeley Lake RD, promotion, deputy forest supervisor, R-8, Cherokee NF

NEW EMPLOYEES

AGNER, JON, forestry technician, Seeley Lake RD
 ALLEY, SUSAN, forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 BRAS, JOHN, forestry technician, Plains RD
 CASSELLI, JOHN, hydrologic technician, SO
 CHRISTOPHER, ROGER, forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 DELILLA, JOSEPH, lead forestry technician, Plains RD
 DUERSCHMIDT, WAYLAND, forestry technician, Plains RD
 ELMSTROM, DEREK, lead forestry technician, Superior RD
 ELMSTROM, KEVIN, lead forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 FURROW, KENNETH, biological science technician, SO
 GASAWAY, LISA, lead forestry technician, Superior RD
 GILBERT, PAUL, forestry technician, Superior RD
 GOULD, RANDALL, hydrologic technician, SO
 GREENLEE, JOHN, botanist, SO
 HARDEN, THERON, electronics technician, SO
 HAYES, ROBERT, engineering draftsman, SO
 IRVINE, ROBERT, surveying technician, SO
 JACOBSON, GREGORY, lead forestry technician, Seeley Lake RD
 KAMPS, STEVE, forestry technician, Superior RD
 KURTH, JAY, lead forestry technician, Missoula RD
 LIGHT, TIMOTHY, archeologist, SO
 MALATARE, JOHN, lead forestry technician, Missoula RD
 MERGELL, ROBERT, forestry technician, Plains RD
 MOLES, DENIS, supervisory forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 MORGAN, DAVID, forestry technician, Superior RD
 MUELLER, MICHAEL, forestry technician, Plains RD
 NAGY, ROCHELLE, lead forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 NIKOLEYCIK, KARL, lead forestry technician, Missoula RD
 OSBORN, ALAN, lead forestry technician, Superior RD
 OWENS, DEREK, lead forestry technician, Plains RD
 PENNIE, CATHERINE, forestry technician, SO
 RIGGERS, BRIAN, fishery biologist, SO
 ROBINSON, BYRON, lead forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 ROSS, WILLIAM, forestry technician, Superior RD
 ROTH, ROBERT, supervisory forestry technician, Superior RD
 RUDE, JEFF, lead forestry technician, Plains RD
 RUMMEL, GLENDON, forestry technician, Plains RD
 SCHROCK III, WALTER, lead forestry technician, Superior RD
 SIXKILLER, JOHNNIE, forestry technician, Ninemile RD
 TANBERG, KAREN, forestry technician, Seeley Lake RD
 WESTPHAL, PEGGY, forestry technician, Seeley Lake RD

WHISENNAND, KRISTEN, archeology technician, SO
 WHITEMAN, BARBARA, lead forestry technician, Missoula RD
 YORK, DAVID, animal packer, Ninemile RD

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

WELLBORN, SHIFFY, maintenance worker, SO, reassignment, Ninemile RD

RESIGNATIONS

MITCHELL, BECKY, personnel clerk, SO

REGIONAL OFFICE

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

CRONKITE, ANGELA, personnel assistant, PM, promotion
 DENNY, ELEANOR, personnel assistant, PM, promotion
 MCCART, KATHY, computer specialist, PM, promotion
 MOGEN, LLOYD, property disposal specialist, ADM, promotion
 WIRTZ, MARGARET, secretary, PAO, cash award
 WYATT, PHYLLIS, supervisory operations unit leader, PM, cash award

REASSIGNMENTS/TRANSFERS

GORE, ROXIE, claims assistant, ADM, transfer from IPNF

OTHER RETIREMENTS

ALEXANDER, RUSSEL, civil engineering technician, East Zone Engineering, Custer NF
 BARTH, RICHARD, forester, St. Maries RD, Idaho Panhandle NFs
 BLACK, ARGUS, forestry technician, Dillon RD, Beaverhead NF
 DILLON, WOODRYNE, personnel assistant, Helena NF
 HICKERSON, THOMAS, forestry technician, Fernan RD, Idaho Panhandle NFs
 HILMO, RON, forestry technician, Ninemile RD, Lolo NF
 HOEM, CAROLYN, resource specialist, SO, Beaverhead NF
 IBISON, KATIE, personnel officer, SO, Kootenai NF
 JONES, LARRY, civil engineering technician, SO, Bitterroot NF
 LEMMER, MERLIN, maintenance worker, Ninemile RD, Lolo NF
 LEWIS, LARRY, engineering technician, Helena NF
 MELLEM, RONALD, cartographic technician, SO, Flathead NF
 NEWTON, GARLAND, civil engineering technician, Sandpoint RD, Idaho Panhandle NFs

OLSON, CHUCK, engineering equipment operator foreman, Bitterroot NF
 ROBERTS, DAVID, fleet and equipment specialist, SO, Kootenai NF
 SANBORN, CORKY, landscape architect, SO, Idaho Panhandle NFs
 SMITH, EDDIE, maintenance worker training leader, Trapper Creek JCC, Bitterroot NF
 SMITH, GAYLE, support services management, SO, Idaho Panhandle NFs
 SNOW, PHYLLIS, hydrologist, SO, Flathead NF
 VAN ALSTYNE, FRED, administrative officer, Anaconda JCC, Bitterroot NF

In Memoriam

Roderick J. Nuxoll, a 44-year-old, heavy equipment operator for the Nez Perce National Forest, died April 11 as a result of injuries suffered when a dump truck rolled down a steep embankment. He is survived by his mother, three brothers, and one sister. Forest employees are deeply saddened by the loss. They will miss Rod who had been with the Forest's engineering unit since 1976. Condolences can be sent to Rod's mother, Mrs. Albert Nuxoll, at Route 2, Box 103, Greencreek, ID 83533.

Carl W. Wetterstrom, 83, died April 16 in Missoula. He began his forestry career with the Washington Forest Fire Association. He worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps in northeastern Washington and on the Flathead National Forest in Kalispell, Montana. His forestry career covered 37 years with the Forest Service, 12 of those years assigned to the Northern Region headquarters in Missoula. He served, with the Army in southeast Asia in World War II.

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